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## THE EUGENIC-EUTHENIC RELATION IN CHILD WELFARE

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Modern social theory has long recognized that sociological systems should afford eugenics a position co-ordinate with eugenics, but social emphasis has hitherto so centered in the environment that the necessary changes in theory have not taken place. This expression of a sociological system based on eugenics and eugenics may be admirably instanced in the child-welfare movements, since eugenics affords the genetic basis for this highly significant eugenics complex of social movements in behalf of the child. Eugenic applications of Mendelism permit the reinterpretation of childhood from an entirely novel point of view; not that eugenics limits itself to the Mendelian theories, but it is further enlarged and rendered secure through the application of biometrical methods to its many problems. Not only do nurtural movements in child-welfare become genetic in so far as they accept eugenics, but the latter, by improving the innate quality of children, itself assumes a child-welfare phase.

Child welfare may be defined as the synthesis of those modern movements in social reform which relate to child problems. It is impossible to analyze this complex fully, since such a constant thread runs through all that one movement merges into the other. For purposes of convenience, however, aside from eugenics, at least nine movements may be differentiated. There is a wide campaign for the prevention of *infant mortality*, ramified into movements for pure milk, and the protection and education of motherhood. A further field in child welfare is differentiated as *somatic hygiene*. This is grouped into movements for school medical inspection, free medical treatment, school nurses, dental clinics, free baths, school lunches, open-air schools; sex hygiene; the anti-tuberculosis movement; the hygiene of the home; care and prevention for blind,

deaf, and crippled children. A third important phase of child welfare is in *mental hygiene*, dealing with neuropathic, epileptic, backward, and mentally defective children. Still another movement provides, through placing-out, supervision, and institutions preferably on the cottage-system, for *dependent* children. This movement is interwoven with that in behalf of the *neglected* child. The evils in *child labor* have resulted in a wide national preventive movement. A further accepted movement is for the *delinquent* child, through juvenile courts, probation, and prevention. Those in child *recreation* are for playgrounds, or children's organizations, as Clubs or the Boy Scouts. Finally, pregnant in possibilities are movements for *school extension*, voiced by the socialization of the schools, or in vocational education and guidance.

Regarded from the purely genetic standpoint, as processes of development, these movements are a social phase in the growth of the child. Essentially they seek the child's adjustment to its environment. The relatively long childhood period, characterized by plasticity, serves to enable them to fulfil this function of developing to the full all genetic potentialities. Within the limits of heredity, potentialities are wholly plastic. Adolescence in particular is the most plastic of the developmental periods, and for children handicapped by heredity a dangerous stage. In the absence of hereditary determiners for super- or subnormality, the child is largely molded as fit or unfit in accordance as its environment releases, unfolds, or represses its heredity. Upon the basis of its innate reflexes, instincts, tendencies, and capacities, its entire mental life is built up through environmental experience; while the dependence of physical development upon the *milieu* is self-evident.

Eugenics, on the other hand, has been defined as the science of better breeding. In the classical definition, as expressed by Sir Francis Galton, eugenics is viewed as "the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally." It is evident that in this generally accepted definition no contradiction is involved if "the racial qualities of future generations" be interpreted in simpler form as "the racial qualities of children." If

the child be "the key to the evolution of man," studies in eugenics must proceed from the child. For the purposes of the child-welfare movements, eugenics might therefore be defined as the science of the improvement of children by breeding; or, in greater detail, as the science treating with all influences which, through the biologic processes of heredity, develop a more perfect inheritance in children. Eugenics rests upon the fact that it is genetically possible to secure for new-born babies an innate mental and physical nature superior to that of the present generation of children. Through this primary aim of genetically *better* children, resulting in increased child welfare and happiness, eugenics is essentially a child-welfare movement.

In these definitions, the line of demarkation between eugenics and the remaining movements for child welfare is revealed. Eugenics is dealing with the child before conception; the remaining movements treat its environmental adjustment after conception. Child-welfare movements, other than eugenics, lie strictly within the province of eugenics, since they deal with the environmental conditions, characterized by Galton as *nurture*. For Galton, *nature* is all that a child brings with himself into the world; *nurture* is all the influence from without. According to Davenport, nature is thus concerned with germinal determinants, to be repressed or furthered by nurture. An equal, identical nurture for all children is impossible in our complex modern environment, nor is it warranted by genetic facts. But a *suitable* opportunity should be afforded every child, until the potential responses ensue. In particular, special opportunities are essential to children possessing exceptional hereditary endowment or children of defective nature. Children of the present subnormal classes, who are normal at birth, must be allowed a nurture far superior to that of their parents in order to avoid similar reductions to subnormality. "It is probable that special environments will be as necessary for types of children as they are for our specialized plants and animals." Child welfare is inseparably bound with the home, the school, and all euthenic reform.

Infant mortality causes so crude a wastage in infant life as to eliminate or effectively weaken the offspring of even strong stocks.

Thus a vast amount of genetic values is lost, and still more far from realized. So detrimental is such a process of natural selection that safer eugenic methods should be substituted. Child hygiene, by adequately safeguarding environment, secures to the child a realization of its inherited assets. Even those movements on behalf of the grossly defective, in so far as they remedy these grave inborn defects, bear an obvious genetic relation to eugenics, since they tend to relieve these handicaps to a fulfilment of the child's heredity, whereas unsocial treatment would have inhibited whatever natural gifts existed. In so far as movements for dependent and neglected children confirm natural gifts guaranteed by eugenic principles they realize their genetic function for this large group of children. With respect to the problems of child labor, no nation should dare risk the resultant deterioration of its childhood of eugenically sound stock, with all the latent potentialities implied therein. The potentiality of the delinquent child often is perverted by the adverse *milieu* juvenile courts and allied movements seek to prevent, the greater part of juvenile delinquency being caused by the warping of normal tendencies. The recreation movement by unfolding and developing the child through the free expression of natural instincts fulfils its eugenic function. Eugenics relies to an impressive extent upon the school for the development or repression of heredity. With the present ineffective development of child welfare, eugenic values in the majority of children are arrested or misapplied. "Fit opportunity in infinite variety" through child welfare and allied movements is a necessity for a full realization of the eugenic program.

Though the overshadowing influence of environment upon the child be recognized, it is also true that man is able to reshape this environment by forming a social heredity which includes all material and cultural achievement. As Dugdale points out, the tendency of biological heredity is to produce an environment which perpetuates that heredity. The vast social heritage into which the child is born has been achieved through the innate capacities of earlier generations. The child-welfare movements themselves are originated by men of inherently high-grade stock, whose insight should be followed as social policy in preference to timid adherences

to past custom; while as Thorndike has shown, in large measure the child creates its own environment by cherishing this or neglecting that opportunity offered. The influence of nurtural forms such as child welfare is thus a measure of heredity.

But even the intelligent modification of the *milieu* is unavailing, if the child be "marred in the original making" through a lack of eugenic foresight. "If the foundation plan of his being is distorted and confused in heredity before his unfoldment begins, then the problem of healthy normal development is rendered insoluble before it is presented." If of an inferior ancestry, children avoid the stimuli to proper adjustment as necessarily as the children of sound parentage seek them out. Traits should be classified, however, rather than children, since the child is not a unit but a bundle of unit characters. The child is defined as a mosaic of dissimilar combinations of definite unit traits, each with their particular determiner, inherited in Mendelian fashion. Apart even from "incurably degenerate stocks," many children lack various advantageous traits or are inferior combinations, and so readily incline to inferiority. Eugenics thus demonstrates that a "single microscopic cell from which one great human being springs is of greater importance to the race than the painstaking efforts of a hundred thousand child-rearers and educators with a child-material below par." A child-welfare movement is "of small consequence so long as it is lavished on a human material constantly shrinking in value because produced by physically and psychically inferior parents."

As Davenport points out, only the children of sound stock carry the determiners for socially desirable reactions; and children who rise to meet a "superior opportunity" must possess determiners adapted thereto. "If a child is well-born, if he springs from sound, sane stock, if he possesses high endowment potential in the germ, then the problem of his unfoldment is well-nigh solved long before it is presented. Such a child is easily protected from adverse influences; and he is delicately and abundantly responsive to the positive influences of education."

Children vary in their original nature. The very forces which eugenics seeks to control create them "bound by their protoplasmic make-up and unequal in their powers." Psychological clinics,

constituting one of the most brilliant phases of applied psychology, utilize the psychology of these individual differences. The experiments of Thorndike upon American school children and the statistical studies of Heron in England, though tempered by the fact that they compare single aspects of the environment with the total force of heredity, nevertheless demonstrate the importance of original nature, secured by eugenics. Child-welfare movements must so relate themselves to the child that they actually become a genetic phase in the evolution of its nature. In proportion as they intelligently conserve traits genetically valuable, they realize their eugenic function. They must approach the child as it *is*, with full knowledge of the limits of its particular heredity, and increasingly depend upon the genetic values secured by eugenics. Dealing with the actual origins of the traits of children later developed by these movements, eugenics must be regarded as the genetic basis for child welfare.

As the genetic basis for other child-welfare movements, and because of the higher, broader standards of racial and child hygiene which it entails, eugenics is by far the most important and most far-seeing movement in child welfare. So fundamental is it, as genetically the basis in this field, that to regard it as a mere movement within child welfare is impossible. Its theoretical importance transcends the entire child-welfare complex, and is comparable only to the total environmental influences of the child. Since eugenics is fundamental to every movement in behalf of the child, these movements conceivably rest upon different eugenic foundations, whose unity in a great eugenics movement is appreciated only when the child-welfare movements as such, are connoted as a unified movement. The child-welfare movements may well be regarded as by-products in the evolutionary process of inherent physical, mental, and so-called moral qualities in children.

Although both eugenics and the child-welfare movements are a unit in dealing with the problem of the child, yet at present the child-welfare factor is not only more generally recognized, but unfortunately to a far greater extent than the hereditary factor. As Pearson suggests, "the whole trend of legislation and social activity has been to disregard parentage and to emphasize environ-

ment," and the relatively recent eugenics reform is still experiencing strenuous opposition. "There seems at present much more danger of forgetting that the biological ideal of a healthful, self-sustaining, evolving human breed is as fundamental as the sociological ideal of a harmoniously integrated society is supreme." "When both policies are admitted to be beneficial and when no one asks that one shall be carried out at the expense of the other, it is a waste of energy to compare their relative justification and urgency." Even if the theory of inheritance of acquired characters, at present considered untenable by experimental biology, be accepted; the influence of child-welfare movements upon the following generation would still be too unstable and too lightly impressed, to compare within such a brief period of time with the permanent genetic advances of selective eugenics. The child-welfare movements may thus rise above their present narrow individuation, and, controlled by the eugenic idea, may attain their full social realization. Though maintaining adequate environments for the unfit, they should "prefer" the children of sound, normal stocks; and insist that by maturity the innately inferior children should be, through education, segregation, or sterilization, placed upon a celibate basis.

Because eugenics directs attention to posterity and children, the "eugenic argument" is one of the strongest incentives to child welfare. Because eugenics points clearly and authoritatively to the necessity of developing genetic potentialities, it offers a most scientific and definite basis for the child-welfare movements. Its relation to the child-welfare field is essentially an optimistic one, since it is the function of eugenics to secure in the inborn nature of the child the tendencies and capacities for a normal development under child welfare. The genetic aspects of this highly important field in social reform thus afford a most admirable illustration of the sociological relationship between eugenics and eugenics.